

## **Eagle Island Committee**

### **Agenda**

August 15, 2006

9 am to noon

City Council Chambers

Eagle City Hall, 660 E. Civic Lane

- 9:00 Welcome, preview of the day's activities (Chair Nancy Merrill)
- 9:15 Presentation of combined draft plan (Beck and Baird Staff)
- 9:30 Discussion of Plan (All)
- 10:00 Demonstration of computer graphics and DVD capabilities (Jason Pfaff)
- 10:30 Next steps (Chair Nancy Merrill)
- 11:00 Adjourn

In attendance: Eagle Mayor Nancy Merrill, Idaho Park and Recreation Board member Ernie Lombard, IDPR Director Bob Meinen, Ada County Commissioner Judy Peavey-Derr, Nampa Mayor Tom Dale, REI Manager Tom Chelstrom, Idaho Conservation League Program Director Justin Hayes, Cascade Raft Company President Tom Long, Meridian Parks and Recreation Director Doug Strong, Bob Bruce, Jason Pfaff, Joe King, Tom Rogers, Comprehensive Planning Manager Rick Just, South Region Parks Manager Rick Brown, Eagle Island State Park Manager Gary Shelley, Sen. Hal Bunderson, Management Services Administrator David Ricks, Dan Baird, Administrative Assistant Jan Johns, Planner Jim Thomas

Co-Chair Merrill discussed public involvement, explaining that all meetings of the committee have been announced on the IDPR website and were public. The public's best chance to comment will come once the recommendation has been made to Gov. Risch and the Idaho Park and Recreation Board.

Co-Chair Lombard presented the final draft of the concept, which at this point is a rough bubble diagram showing approximate areas dedicated to particular uses. The concept took elements from the two previous planning charrettes and combined them into a single vision.

Lombard mentioned that he had just learned that Fish and Game was planning to dramatically increase the size of the adjacent fish hatchery operation, a development that should be positive for the proposed wetlands interpretive center. Additionally, he had learned of a potential performing arts center planned for neighboring property which could enhance programming at the proposed Eagle Island amphitheater.

The draft concept for the park includes a new, "grand entrance" off State Street. Visitors will cross the river on a new bridge specifically designed to provide safe passage on and off the island, even when existing bridges might be impassable during a major flood. A new welcome center will orient visitors to the park, and introduce them to Idaho's entire park system through interactive exhibits.

For the first time, Eagle Island State Park will encourage camping. There will be a small campground for RVs, but there will be several areas dedicated to camping for scout, school and church groups who want to set up tents, and for kayakers and canoeists.

The plan includes a greatly enhanced trail system along the river bottoms, near protected wetlands, and beside a new series of water trails.

Perhaps the most significant feature of the park, the water trails will include kayaking and canoeing opportunities that will allow non-motorized boaters to criss-cross the island, skim across lakes, and wind through meandering channels to view wildlife, and test their paddling skills. The design is necessarily conceptual at this point. The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, with the help of city, county, state and federal agencies, will conduct a thorough study of water dynamics on the island to assure that any modifications made will not have a negative impact on land owners and irrigators up and down the river. In addition, the park and its facilities will be designed to accommodate occasional floodwaters without restricting or backing up the river.

The design will increase wildlife habitat through the preservation of existing wetlands and the development of additional wetlands. Additionally, visitors—especially children from area schools—will be able to experience nature through a series of unobtrusive pathways, viewing stations and blinds, all a part of what will be a world class wetlands interpretive center, operated cooperatively with Idaho Fish and Game and local schools.

The wetlands center concept includes an amphitheater to accommodate school groups that will double as an outdoor venue for Treasure Valley theater and music productions.

Eagle Island State Park is probably best known for its existing waterslide. That will remain, as will the swimming beach. In future years additional concentrated water features may be added as public demand increases. Additional picnic shelters are planned for several sites around the park.

There will also continue to be some access to the park from Hatchery Road for cars, but it will be primarily a service road and for emergencies.

The long anticipated completion of the greenbelt bike path all the way from Lucky Peak to Eagle Island State Park is a part of the vision, as is a connection with bike paths reaching out from Meridian.

Those who want to paddle to the park will be able to reach it either from the north or south channel of the Boise River. Or, paddlers can use the park as a jumping off point for trips down stream.

The concept includes an increased variety of activities: Bike riding, swimming, camping, canoeing, fishing, picnicking, walking, and learning about nature. The park will be designed in such a way as to separate activities by contouring and screening.

Senator Bunderson laid out the needs of the Legislature. He says they will want to see a phased funding plan that includes revenues and expenses.

There was some discussion of multiple lakes v. one large lake. Multiple smaller lakes and channels seems to be better, providing more control and the possibility for more activities.

There was a discussion regarding concessionaires and outfitters. Mayor Tom Dale said he thought food concessionaires, though perhaps necessary, would bring in little revenue. Tom Long described existing outfitting opportunities on the river, and said this plan would enhance those.

The committee watched a presentation from Jason Pfaff of Visual Genesis. He demonstrated computer animation capabilities that will help describe the committee's vision to the public. IDPR staff and the staff of Beck and Baird will work with him on the product.

The co-chairs will meet with Governor Risch prior to the next full committee meeting to brief him on the committee's progress.

The committee will next meet on September 11, 9 am at Eagle City Hall. It will potentially be the final meeting of the committee, as the refined final concept will be presented.